

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6988

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 3010

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PINS, NO

SUBJ: FAREWELL CALL ON NORWEGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

AUGUST 17, I TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON A NUMBER OF CURRENT ISSUES: THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS, THE ISRAELI TERRORIST CASE, ROUND II OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE, THE "YEAR OF EUROPE" AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SECRETARY WILL VISIT OSLO. WHILE NOTHING OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE EMERGED FROM OUR CONVERSATION, THE FOLLOWING POINTS MAY BE OF INTEREST. DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS VIBE SAT IN AND WAS THE SOURCE OF SEVERAL OF THE COMMENTS.

2. I ASKED VAARVIK HOW HE VIEWS THE ELECTION IN HIS NEW ROLE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTER PARTY. HE HEDGED MAKING ANY PREDICTION IN VIEW OF THE NUMBER OF PARTIES RUNNING THIS YEAR, BUT COMMENTED THAT LABOR WILL CERTAINLY SEEK TO EXPLOIT THE SPLIT AMONG THE NON-SOCIALISTS. HE DESCRIBED AS REALISTIC RECENT SPECULATION THAT LABOR COULD FORM A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT EVEN IF IT GETS ONLY 43-44 PERCENT OF THE VOTES. CHAIRMAN SEIP OF THE NEW PEOPLES PARTY MAY NOT EVEN GET A SEAT IN THE STORTING, IN VARVIK'S JUDGMENT, AND HIS PARTY AND THE LIBERALS TOGETHER WILL GET AT MOST 4 TO 6 SEATS. THE ONLY SURE SEAT FOR SEIP'S PARTY IS THAT OF THE

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MAYOR OF BERGEN MYRVOLL. MEMBERSHIP IN THE EEC WILL BE AN ISSUE

ONLY AMONG THE FISHERMEN OF NORTH NORWAY. SUPPORT FOR NATO IS AT A HIGH POINT AND IS UNLIKELY TO BE AN ISSUE WITH THE LEFT SOCIALISTS WHO ARE CONCENTRATING ON DOMESTIC ISSUES LIKE "SOCIALIZATION" OF THE BANKS.

3. VARVIK SAID THAT ISRAEL HAD NOT YET PROTESTED THE EXPULSION OF ITS EMBASSY SECURITY OFFICER (WHO HAD NOT YET LEFT). NORWAY'S AMBASSADOR TO THE UN ALGARD HAS TOLD VARVIK THAT THE LILLEHAMMER CASE WILL MAKE IT EASIER FOR NORWAY TO TAKE A FIRM STAND AGAINST TERRORISM AT THE FORTHCOMING UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SINCE IT CANNOT BE ACCUSED NOW OF A PRO-ISRAEL BIAS. THE NORDIC COUNCIL WILL DISCUSS TERRORISM AT ITS FORTHCOMING MEETING AUGUST 30-31.

4. VARVIK HAD LITTLE TO SAY BEYOND GENERALITIES REGARDING THE NEXT PHASE OF THE CSCE, VIBE COMMENTED, HOWEVER, ON NORWAY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ROMANIA'S REPORTED INTENTION TO PRESS THE LINK BETWEEN DISARMAMENT MEASURES AND THE CSCE IN GENEVA. HE POINTED OUT THAT, WHILE THE RUMANIANS ARE INCLINED TO GO TOO FAR ON THIS QUESTION, NORWAY HAS A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW THAN THE U.S. AND FEELS THAT A SECURITY CONFERENCE SHOULD TREAT QUESTIONS LIKE CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES, AND TRY TO GIVE A POSITIVE IMPULSE TO THE MBFR TALKS IN VIENNA.

5. IN RESPONSE TO MY GENERAL COMMENT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE "YEAR OF EUROPE", VIBE DISCUSSED A MEETING IN WASHINGTON LAST WEEK BETWEEN ASSISTANT SECRETARY STOESSEL AND THE NORWEGIAN CHARGE AT WHICH STOESSEL STRESSED THE HOPE OF THE PRESIDENT TO MEET IN EUROPE WITH OTHER HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT. WE AGREED THAT, GIVEN THE SLOW PROGRESS BEING MADE ON THE QUESTION OF A POSSIBLE ATLANTIC DECLARATION, TIME IS SHORT TO ORGANIZE A EUROPEAN SUMMIT MEETING.

6. FINALLY, WE DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY THAT VARVIK MIGHT ATTEND THE UNGA. MUCH WILL DEPEND, OF COURSE, ON WHAT HAPPENS AT THE ELECTIONS, BUT A VISIT WOULD BE POSSIBLE BEFORE THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS FORMED (IN WHICH VARVIK EVIDENTLY DOES NOT EXPECT TO PARTICIPATE). I NOTED THAT THE SECRETARY REMAINS VERY ANXIOUS TO VISIT NORWAY AND MAY TRY TO COMBINE A VISIT WITH THE NATO MINISTERIAL IN DECEMBER -- A SUGGESTION WHICH VARVIK HEARTILY ENDORSED.

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